



From : Joe Dorward  
Sent : 16 April 2013  
To : Dick Balharry  
Subject : Red Deer Numbers

Dick,

Ha! 'recreational killing' I'll be using that expression from now on.

In recent years I have been all over Mar Lodge Estate and I'm not slow to voice my opinion. The problem is that I'm not any kind of authority and hesitate to fully trust my instinctive reaction, which is why I value the opinions of those who actually know. During those recent visits the depth of grass I found suggested to me that not much grazing was going on in the upper glens of Mar Lodge Estate.

There are seedlings all over the estate - last month I was at Luibeg and Allanaquoich where I saw many seedlings. I am as concerned about under-grazing as I am about over-grazing, but I've no way of knowing which side of the balance the current red deer numbers are, but I suspect there are too few red deer in the Regeneration Zone and that the habitat is unbalanced by under-grazing. It is self-evident that under-grazing of grass and heather puts regeneration at risk through seeds not reaching the ground and by increasing the severity of any wildfire.

Instinctively I'd say there are enough seedlings in the Regeneration Zone to suggest that allowing red deer numbers to rise would reduce

the rate of regeneration without stopping it, but I don't know that for sure.

Clearly red deer numbers - across Scotland - must be brought below and kept below their historical levels in order to rebalance the habitat for red deer as well as the other woodland animals.

I agree that a 'responsible long-term strategy' is needed, but suspect while recreational killing and regeneration 'at all costs' are competing priorities on neighbouring estates / areas we'll not see that anytime soon.

Joe